You're Never Too Old for Square Dancing, and . . .

By BERT BINNY

NEVER TOO YOUNG For MIXERS, REELS

THERE ARE over 200 of them and they range in age from seven to 13. These are the Colwood Square Wheels and the Alma Squares, Victoria's best-known and largest aggregation of youthful square dancers.

Of course, the term "square dancers" is generic rather than specific. Both the Square Wheels and the Alma Squares perform round as well as square dances to say nothing of mixers, contras and reels. Mixers involve changing partners (like horses in midstream) rather than going steady with the same one throughout the routine. Contras are simply line dances.

Nancy Page and Kelly Patterson, Rhea Dillabaugh and Calvin Patterson, Donna Bruce and Ronnie Rhode are partners in this number

Both organizations are made up of approximately 65 per cent girls and, in both organizations, these young ladies are resplendent in official blue and white skirts. Their partners at Colwood wear red shirts with black yoke and cuffs while male Alma Squares run the kaleidoscopic gamut of any hues in western shirts.

And both clubs are growing as well as going concerns. Now in their second season of whirling activity, the Square Wheels have burgeoned from a membership of 78 to 165. The Alma Squares number about 40. Their ranks have been full from the start.

Practices take place every Friday at Colwood Community Hall and every Saturday at the Williams Building Hall on Broughton Street.

The moving spirits and presiding geniuses behind this valuable and popular movement are Will and Kay Deacon and Joyce Kerr. Moreover, codifying the perpetual motion and funnelling the untiring energy of scores of youngsters into precise and artistic forms cannot be the easiest occupation imaginable. And yet the work is done on a purely voluntary basis.

But it has been successful in more ways than one.

The terrific activity of over 200 youngsters which, if it were possible to concentrate it, would probably be almost atomic in strength, has been guided into channels where its power has contributed mightily not only to their own enjoyment but as much to the enjoyment of hundreds of others; those who take the form of spectators.

Both the Colwood Square Wheels and the Alma Squares have made numerous public appearances. They have been seen at Fairs in many places, at hospitals, at PTA meetings and at conventions.

They entertained at the office managers' convention in 1958, were featured at the junior talent performance in Beacon Hill Park, constituted the first children's display at the new William Head penitentiary and formed an attraction at the Centennial Square Dance Round-up at the Memorial Arena.

And, right now, they are preparing for their second Round-up appearance on April 18 when they will perform both in dance and in pantomime.

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Nor must the "Aquaducks" be forgotten! There is water ballet in Florida, pearl diving in the Indian Ocean and Esther Williams in California, but members of the Colwood Square Wheels and the Alma Squares were the first youngsters in Canada—and likley many other countries as well—to earn and secure official recognition as "aquaducks."

An aquaduck is, very simply, a square dancer who has taken to the water. The belief is current that the original aquaducks did so because of the heat. However, be this as it may, aquaduckship is now an officially recognized variety of square dancing and admission to the ranks involves dancing a complete routine in water over the knees.

It sounds interesting. Perhaps trying it out in the birdbath would be the best approach. But this is pure speculation. The Colwood Square Wheels or the Alma Squares can speak from experience and, indeed, demonstrate also not only the qualifications of an aquaduck but also all the other entertaining phases of square, round and contra dancing.

Because they, obviously, know their stuff.

Here are some of the boys and girls of the Square Wheels.